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Prime Minister's schedule, October 19

NIKKEI (Page 2) (Full)
October 20, 2009

09:52 Met Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) President Sadako Ogata at Prime Minister's Official Residence (Kantei).
10:21 Met Vice Finance Minister Yasutake Tango.
14:05 Met National Strategy Minister Naoto Kan and Chief Cabinet Secretary Hirofumi Hirano. Joined by prime minister's assistant Yoshikatsu Nakayama.
15:55 Met Hirano.
16:28 Met Cabinet Office Senior Vice Minister Kohei Otsuka.
17:04 Met Indian National Security Adviser M. K. Narayanan. Later met with House of Representatives member Keishu Tanaka.
19:00 Attended welcome reception for U.S. Ambassador and Mrs. John Roos by Japan Stanford Association at Tokyo Club in Roppongi.
19:53 Met Minister of Health, Labor and Welfare Akira Nagatsuma at the Kantei. Hirano and others were also present.

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21:32 Arrived at his private residence.

4) Futenma relocation will not be postponed; Hatoyama says
"Japan-U.S. agreement carries weight"

YOMIURI (Page 1) (Excerpts)
October 20, 2009

Prime Minister Yukio Hatoyama emphasized yesterday evening that the government will not put off the deadline stipulated in an agreement reached between Japan and the U.S. on the relocation of the U.S. Marine Corps' Futenma Air Station in Ginowan City to the coastal area of Camp Schwab in Nago City, both in Okinawa Prefecture, by 2014. The ruling coalition of the Democratic Party of Japan, the Social Democratic Party, and the People's New Party has agreed to review the existing accord on the realignment of U.S. forces in Japan, including the Futenma relocation plan. The remarks yesterday by Hatoyama, however, suggest that the government would also consider the current plan as one option.

Speaking before reporters at the Prime Minister's Official Residence last evening, Hatoyama said: "The agreement reached between the governments of Japan and the U.S. carries weight. We should not readily assume that we can put off the schedule beyond 2014."

5) Ospreys to be deployed at new base; premise of environmental assessment collapses

AKAHATA (Page 1) (Full)
October 20, 2009

The U.S. Marine Corps has recently issued its fiscal year 2010 aviation program which clearly stipulates that MV-22 Osprey state-of-the-art vertical takeoff and landing aircraft will be deployed to the envisaged new base in the Henoko district in the city of Nago, which is to replace the U.S. Marine Corps' Futenma Air Station (in Ginowan). The MV-22 Ospreys will replace the CH-46E mid-size helicopters currently deployed to Futenma.

In its aviation program released annually, the U.S. Marine Corps has made clear Futenma deployment plans for 2012 and beyond. This is the first time that the U.S. Marine Corps has clearly specified the additional deployment (of MV-22 Ospreys) to the new base to be completed in 2014.

The U.S. document confirms that the new base is premised on a plan to deploy the Osprey, which is noisier than the CH-46E.

According to the fiscal 2010 aviation program, the U.S. Marine Corps will begin replacing (the CH-46Es) with Ospreys at one of the two companies belonging to Marine Aircraft Group 36 (MAG36) deployed at Futenma Air Station in October 2012 and those at another company in April 2013 on the continental United States. In addition to Futenma, the Futenma replacement facility (FRF) is specified as a deployment site for (Ospreys).

The Japanese government is pushing ahead with an environmental impact assessment for constructing the new base premised on the types of aircrafts currently deployed at Futenma Air Station. Local residents are calling for making the Osprey an object of the assessment. In response, the Okinawa Defense Bureau has repeatedly indicated that (the Osprey) is not an object of the environmental

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impact assessment because the U.S. side has replied that the deployment of the aircraft has not been specifically decided.

Now that the U.S. Marine Corps has repeatedly released its programs based on the deployment of the Osprey to the new base, it can be said that the premise of the environmental assessment has collapsed.

6) SDP secretary general: Futenma Air Station must be moved out of country

NIKKEI (Page 3) (Full)
October 20, 2009

The Social Democratic Party (SDP) reaffirmed at its cabinet minister liaison meeting held on Oct. 19 its position to seek a review of the existing Japan-U.S. agreement on the relocation of the U.S. Marine Corps' Futenma Air Station. Secretary General Yasumasa Shigeno emphatically indicated in a news conference that Futenma Air Station must ultimately be moved out of the country. He said, "Our party's view is that Futenma Air Station should be relocated to a place outside Japan."

7) Defense Secretary Gates in Japan today; U.S. applying pressure by accepting moving Futenma replacement facility farther offshore

YOMIURI (Page 2) (Excerpts)
October 20, 2009

U.S. Secretary of Defense Robert Gates will visit Japan for two days from Oct. 20. He will meet Defense Minister Toshimi Kitazawa, Foreign Minister Katsuya Okada, and other officials to discuss the relocation of the U.S. Marines' Futenma Air Station (in Ginowan City, Okinawa) and other issues. With regard to the current plan to relocate the Futenma base to the coastal area of the U.S. forces' Camp Schwab (in Nago City), the U.S. government says it accepts "minor modifications." Gates is expected to reiterate the U.S.' demand to implement this plan, and the Japanese government, which has not decided on a clear policy, will likely have difficulty responding.

In addition to Futenma relocation, Afghan aid measures to replace the Maritime Self-Defense Force's refueling mission in the Indian Ocean, the selection of Japan's next main fighter (FX), and other issues are expected to be discussed at Gates' meetings with Japanese officials.

8) U.S. Defense Secretary in Japan today; compromise on Futenma relocation unlikely

TOKYO SHIMBUN (Page 2) (Abridged)
October 20, 2009

U.S. Secretary of Defense Robert Gates will visit Japan for two days starting on Oct. 20 to meet with Prime Minister Yukio Hatoyama and other officials. Since the visit comes right after a senior Department of Defense official indicated that the U.S. will only accept minor modifications to the current plan to relocate the U.S. forces' Futenma Air Station (in Ginowan City) to the coastal area of Camp Schwab (in Nago City), it will probably be difficult for the Japanese government, which is looking at the possibility of relocating the Futenma base out of Okinawa, to find common ground

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with the U.S. side.

Gates's visit will be the first by a U.S. cabinet member after the inauguration of the Hatoyama administration. Gates will meet Foreign Minister Katsuya Okada on the afternoon of Oct. 20 and hold separate meetings with Hatoyama and Defense Minister Toshimi Kitazawa on the morning of Oct. 21.

Right before Gates's visit to Japan, a senior U.S. Department of Defense official has indicated that moving the runways (of the proposed Futenma replacement facility) further offshore for about 50 meters under the current relocation plan will be acceptable and warned that failure to implement the Japan-U.S. agreement on this plan will be "a blow to the bilateral relationship of trust." Gates is expected to convey the same message and reject any major review of the current plan, including relocation out of Okinawa.

Talking to reporters about the current relocation plan on Oct. 19, Hatoyama said: "We need to have the flexibility to think about whether there are other options with an open mind," conveying his demand on the U.S. side. He also said: "I am not thinking that we have to settle all the issues before the visit of Mr. Gates or of U.S. President Barack Obama (in November)," thus indicating that no major progress on the relocation issue is expected for the time being.

9) "Use of SDF troops for assistance to Afghanistan is under consideration," says senior vice foreign minister

TOKYO SHIMBUN (Page 2) (Full)
October 20, 2009

Senior Vice Foreign Minister Tetsuro Fukuyama revealed in a speech given in Tokyo on Oct. 19 that he is looking into the use of Self-Defense Forces as an aid measure to be extended to Afghanistan in place of the current refueling mission in the Indian Ocean. He noted, "We must look into such a possibility. We will identify what options are available and explore their feasibility."

In specific terms, in view of the situation in Afghanistan where battles are continuing, it would be conceivable to have Air Self-Defense Force personnel engage in airlift operations of relief supplies to refugees in neighboring nations, instead of dispatching them for an on-site mission.

Parliamentary Defense Secretary Akihisa Nagashima also said on the same day after discussing new aid measures with British Parliamentary Under-Secretary of Defense Quentin Davies, "I cannot say that the use of SDF troops is not one of the options (for new aid measures)."

The government has made the decision to end the refueling mission in January next year. In the meantime, it is looking into promoting assistance for basic human needs, including vocational training to former Taliban soldiers.

However, due to poor security situation in Afghanistan, private citizens are limited in what they can do in extending assistance for basic human needs. If Japan only extends financial assistance as a new assistance measure, it could draw criticism from the international community. As such, the government has presumably decided to look into using the SDF.

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10) Prime Minister Hatoyama: Flexibility in implementing campaign platform important

ASAHI (Page 4) (Full)
October 20, 2009

When asked by the press corps about whether the manifesto (a set of campaign pledges) should be implemented without fail, Prime Minister Yukio Hatoyama yesterday said: "A manifesto includes pledges on which the public does not necessarily pin hopes. So we should consider them in a flexible manner," indicating the possibility of changing his party's manifesto if he judges it difficult to get support from the public.

Hatoyama also stated: "The most important thing is to manage the government in a way that satisfies the public. The manifesto is important because it is a commitment, but just sticking to it is not good for the public."

11) LDP President Tanigaki visits Yasukuni Shrine

ASAHI (Page 4) (Full)
October 20, 2009

Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) President Sadakazu Tanigaki visited Yasukuni Shrine in Kudan, Tokyo, at noon on Oct. 19. The shrine is now holding its autumn festival. "I am chairman of the association of the bereaved families of the war dead in Kyoto. I prayed for the souls of those that died not only in World War II but also in all of the wars of the Japanese modern history," Tanigaki said to reporters. Regarding the fact that he took a negative stance toward Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi's visits to Yasukuni Shrine, he said, "At that time I was also giving consideration to international relations, so I thought that the prime minister should refrain from visiting the shrine."

12) Amano indicates eagerness to resolve North Korean nuclear issue

YOMIURI (Page 2) (Full)
October 20, 2009

A symposium titled "Nuclear Nonproliferation and Peaceful Use of Nuclear Energy" on cooperation between Japan and the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) was held yesterday at Imperial Hotel in Uchisaiwaicho, Tokyo. The symposium was hosted by the Net Journalist Association and others, and supported by the Yomiuri Shimbun and other media organizations. Yukiya Amano, currently the Foreign Ministry's ambassador in charge of the nuclear nonproliferation and nuclear energy, who will assume the post of IAEA director general in December, sent to the symposium a video message in which he indicated his eagerness to resolve the Iranian and North Korean nuclear issues, saying, "The role of the IAEA is extremely important. I will tackle the issues head on."

13) Government panel eyes budget-management system spanning several years starting in fiscal 2011

NIKKEI (Page 3) (Full)
October 20, 2009

The government's national strategy taskforce yesterday finalized a

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report on future options for budget compilation starting in fiscal 2010. The report proposes introducing a budget-management system spanning several years starting in fiscal 2011. It also presents a program in which the government will reveal in fiscal 2010 guidelines for medium- to long-term fiscal discipline and then work out a "mid-term fiscal frame" for expected state revenues and expenditures in fiscal 2011-2013. In addition, the report includes measures to make the budget-compilation process more transparent by using the Internet.

The government will instruct all the cabinet ministers to proceed with budgetary compilation in accordance with this policy line within this week.

Under the budget-management system envisioned by the taskforce, the government would show in the mid-term fiscal frame a general framework for state revenues and expenditures, as well as means to reduce spending. Such would be reflected in every fiscal year's budget. The taskforce judges that the envisioned system does not infringe on the Constitution, which stipulates the principle of a single-fiscal-year system.

14) Finance minister hints at fresh issuance of government bonds worth all-time high of 50 trillion yen

NIKKEI (Top Play) (Lead para.)

October 20, 2009

Referring to the management of state finances in fiscal 2009, Finance Minister Hirohisa Fujii, during an interview with the Nihon Keizai Shimbun, indicated his intention to make up for a tax revenue shortfall of more than 6 trillion yen with the additional issuance of government bonds. He hinted at an outlook that the issuance of government bonds would expand to the 50 trillion yen level, although the government had previously estimated such an amount at 44 trillion yen. As a result, the amount of the issuance of government bonds will exceed tax revenues for the first time since fiscal 1946, when the nation was in a state of disorder after the War. Concerning the abolition of provisional taxes, such as the gasoline tax, which (the ruling Democratic Party of Japan pledged in its manifesto for the Lower House election), Fujii hinted at the possibility of adopting a measure to boost tax revenues, saying that switching those taxes to a tax to pay for measures against global warming, which is to be newly established, is "one option."

15) Poll: Hatoyama cabinet's support rate at 60.9 PERCENT

SANKEI (Page 2) (Abridged)
October 20, 2009

The rate of public support for Prime Minister Hatoyama and his cabinet, at one month since coming into office, remained high, scoring 60.9 PERCENT in a public opinion survey jointly conducted by the Sankei Shimbun and Fuji News Network (FNN) on Oct. 17-18. However, the Hatoyama cabinet's support rate dropped 7.8 percentage points from a previous survey conducted Sept. 16-17 shortly after its debut. Meanwhile, the now-ruling Democratic Party of Japan's popularity also fell 3.8 points to 40.6 PERCENT. The Hatoyama government still maintains momentum, but its economic policy measures received much lower marks this time around. Economic trends could have an impact on the Hatoyama cabinet's future support ratings.

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